

**Fifth Sunday after Trinity  
Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020**



Dear Friends,

***'You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace'***  
(Isaiah 55: 12)

I playfully defy you to be able to read through today's Old Testament scripture from Isaiah 55 without bursting into song – or at least admitting to having the tune to the joyful Richard Irwin hymn buzzing around your head!!

You shall go out with joy  
And be let forth with peace,  
And the mountains and the hills  
Will break forth before you.  
There'll be shouts of joy  
And the trees of the fields  
Will clap, will clap their hands.

And the trees of the fields will clap their hands,  
And the trees of the fields will clap their hands,  
And the trees of the fields will clap their hands,  
While you go out with joy.

I reprint it here, because although no singing is yet allowed to take place in our churches, it is perfectly possible for you to sing this (and any other hymnody) to your hearts content in the privacy of your own home – indeed the behaviour is to be encouraged! The music to this hymn can be found online by googling 'You Shall Go Out With Joy.' The great prophet, Isaiah, knew only too well the potent properties of praising God in song, helping the people to feel God's presence even in times of darkness and uncertainty. In these closing chapters of Isaiah's ministry, his message softens from words of scathing condemnation and repentance to the sinful people of Judah who had turned their eyes and hearts away from God, to a new prophetic, filled with consolation and hope; reassuring the faithful that God's forgiveness was close to them, and would bless them with His joy and peace in the coming of the Messiah.

These last months have been difficult for us all as Coronavirus has affected each and every one of our lives. Very sadly, the death toll continues to rise across the globe, and our songs of praise to God have turned to lament and supplication as we have prayed so hard for all those who have been affected, directly and indirectly, by the ravages of this invisible scourge. But life goes on, and those we have lost would want us to journey forward, living every precious and virus-free breath to the full.



***Samson and Delilah by Peter Paul Rubens***

Happily, restrictions are beginning to lift, enabling many people to return to places of work and to enjoy a wider range of leisure activities. I have noticed how the stream of walkers through Littleton Stud farm has dropped off considerably in this past week. Evidently the most popular destination has been to the barber or hairdresser – I have heard a number of people squealing with excitement that they have been able to secure an appointment to restore their unruly tresses! It is remarkable how restorative a haircut can be ... though I suspect our Hebrew hero, Samson, might have a few words on our choice of hairdresser!

Thankfully, Parish life is, at last, beginning to open up. Weddings are now permissible, though limited to a total of 30 people present for the service. We have had a flurry of relieved couples booking their nuptials – all very exciting!! It is also possible to use church buildings for Funerals and Thanksgiving services, though the same strict restrictions on the number of people attending applies. Many of you across the Benefice have been grateful for the opening of our churches for private prayer. With the exception of St Peter and Holy Cross at Wherwell, who do not presently have the necessary resources to comply with regulations, our other parishes are welcoming visitors – please do look at The Downs Benefice Website for updates on days and hours of church opening for each village.



***'La Porte Derriere' by Aldo Balding***

Jeremiah's words of encouragement for us to shout with joy to the Lord, reach across time to our doors this weekend! I am delighted to announce to you all here that **Sunday services will begin to resume in our Benefice from Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> July.**

We will begin offering **one service in the benefice each week**, for the next seven weeks, taking us up to 30<sup>th</sup> August. The table below gives a brief outline of the services available across each of the seven weeks.

**Short-Term Schedule for the reintroduction of Sunday services in The Downs Benefice  
19<sup>th</sup> July 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

	19 <sup>th</sup> July	26 <sup>th</sup> July	29 <sup>th</sup> July	2 <sup>nd</sup> August	9 <sup>th</sup> August	16 <sup>th</sup> August	23 <sup>rd</sup> August	30 <sup>th</sup> August
<b>All Services will begin at 10am</b>								
<b>Chilbolton</b>				HC		MP		
<b>Crawley</b>	MP							
<b>Littleton</b>			HC				HC	
<b>Sparsholt</b>	Closed	HC		Closed	MP			
<b>Wherwell</b>							Closed	HC
<b>ALL SEATS MUST BE BOOKED VIA THE BENEFICE OFFICE: (01962) 880845</b>								

**Key:**

- **HC** - Holy Communion – Common Worship.
- **MP** - Morning Prayer – either from Common Worship or Northumbria Community.
- **Closed** – Denotes a church is closed for cleaning following a wedding on previous day.
- **All services begin at 10am** - Please arrive in good time to sanitised and be seated.
- **All seats must be booked in advance** – Please call Benefice Office to book.

I hope this table is self-explanatory, but if you do have any queries, please call the **Benefice Office on (01962) 880845.**

I have tried to put a realistic *short-term* schedule of services together which will meet the needs of the benefice and the resources available to us in offering them. We are offering a 'mixed economy' of both Morning Prayer and Holy Communion services, aiming to satisfy those of you who feel uncomfortable with attending a Holy Communion service just yet. You will see that we are beginning on Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> July at Crawley with a simple service of Morning Prayer, so as to 'test the water' before introducing a Holy Communion the following Sunday at Sparsholt. You will notice there is also a Midweek Holy Communion on offer at Littleton, for those who might be unable to attend a Sunday service.

All services will be taken from Common Worship or the Northumbria Community liturgies simply because it is too complicated to produce a booklet for BCP services at this stage.

To ensure the strictest possible adherence to Coronavirus guidelines the following precautions will be taken:

- As Rector, I will bring all the necessary elements, vessels and cloths and will personally lay-up the Altar for each Holy Communion service.
- Holy Communion wafers will be dispensed by me alone, using sanitised hands. If I inadvertently touch a parishioner in the giving of a wafer, I will immediately re-sanitise my hands before proceeding to the next communicant.
- The Common Cup or Chalice will not be shared among parishioners.
- Disposable service leaflets will be provided for each service. Parishioners will be asked to take the ones they have used with them to dispose of them at home.
- Church will provide sanitiser for parishioners to use on entry to church. Parishioners to provide and use their own face masks at their own discretion.
- No singing of hymns or choirs allowed in any church service at this stage.
- Please do not attend a service you have booked if you feel unwell on the Saturday or Sunday morning, especially if you have Coronavirus symptoms.



***'La Chaise Verte' by Bénédicte Garnier-Fihey***

This Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> July, the parish churches of St Mary the Less at Chilbolton, St Mary's at Crawley, St Catherine's at Littleton and St Stephen's at Sparsholt will each be open for private prayer – Chilbolton Church will be open between the hours of 9-4pm, all the others will be open between 10am and 4pm.

If you are unable to travel to a physical church, do join the Café Church team for our short on-line 'service' this Sunday. Until we are able to gather together in person for this service, the Café Church team are providing a weekly on-line service which you can access via The Downs Benefice website at: <http://downsbenefice.org/> This week Carol Ward will be looking at 'Generosity in Mission,' and we will be hearing from Mike Whitehead, the Chair of Trustees at Winchester Basics Bank; from Missionaries, Bishop Nick and Catherine Drayson on their work in Argentina; and from the Pain family in Japan.

Carol points us to the Methodist missionary, John Wesley, to whom this quote is attributed: *'Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.'* In the midst of all our excitement at the thought of corporate parish worship resuming, I am mindful that this week heralds two significant commemorations wherein people, staring in the face of adversity, gave of themselves even unto death.



### ***'Spitfire' courtesy of The Royal British Legion***

The first national commemoration, on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> July, heralds the 80th Anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of Britain. Guy Upward from The Royal British Legion writes:

It was on 10th July, 1940, that the Luftwaffe launched a co-ordinated attack on shipping convoys in the Channel. Raids also hit airfields and ports along the South and East coasts as well as in Wales. This ignited a hard-fought, three-month struggle for air superiority that ended when the outnumbered RAF managed to push back the German forces for good, forcing Hitler to postpone, and eventually cancel Operation Sea Lion, his plan to invade Britain. The Battle of Britain was a key victory in World War II: a huge blow against the Axis powers, making a German invasion of our country unlikely, if not impossible. The bravery and skill of our RAF pilots during these pivotal months protected the freedom and democracy we cherish today.

Our brave Armed Forces and their Allies, gave everything they had during World War II in order for us to know peace in our time. Our second commemoration this week, falls on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> July and serves to remind us of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica, which brought the horrors of the Holocaust into our modern day experience. Good, honest men, women and children fought so hard to protect their freedom and democracy in Bosnia Herzegovina, but many thousands perished at the hands of Ratko Mladić and Bosnian Serb forces for their faith, just as Hitler and the Nazis had persecuted the Jews during the Second World War. Below is an extract from a Reflection which I gave to Winchester City Council this week in my new role as Chaplain to our 821<sup>st</sup> Mayor of Winchester, Cllr Patrick Cunningham.

Yours, holding onto the peace of Christ,

**Jax**

**Rector, The Downs Benefice**

## **Reflection on Srebrenica Memorial Day – 11 July 2020 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Genocide**

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide. It represents the worst atrocity on European soil since the Holocaust of the Second World War. As we commemorate all those who perished, we reflect upon the capacity for human hatred and prejudice to wreak unimaginable atrocities upon an entire people.

25 years ago, on 11 July 1995, Bosnian Serb forces, led by the former military commander and convicted war criminal, General Ratko Mladić, overran and captured the town of Srebrenica in Eastern Bosnia - which had been declared a UN Safe Area. In the days that followed, 8,372 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were systematically murdered and buried in mass graves. Many more thousands of women, children, the sick and the elderly were subjected to dehumanising torture and forcibly deported.



This week, on the 11th July, our nation honours the victims and survivors of this genocide, and we pledge to create a more cohesive society in which difference is both respected and valued. The recent, racially motivated murders of George Floyd in the United States, and of two sisters, Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry, in a London park, are current pointers to our need to ensure a safer world community for all peoples.

The events in Srebrenica 25 years ago, deserve to be remembered; the past not ignored. As a nation, we must reaffirm our commitment to standing up against all forms of hatred and prejudice which threaten to target individuals or groups based on any type of difference. We must pledge to work for reconciliation and healing between all our peoples - working for peace, both locally and across the world. In so doing, we shine a light of hope, illuminating the darkness by standing together against discrimination wherever it exists.

In solidarity with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we will now commemorate the memory of all those who perished and whose lives have been traumatised by the Genocide. We will remember them, and in our remembrance, pledge to ensure that no people are ever again killed for the colour of their skin, their ethnicity, their gender, their sexuality, their faith or none.



## **A Prayer for Srebrenica and for our WWII heroes**

*Adapted from the prayer written by Reverend Julian Francis.*

God of truth and justice,  
we remember today the consequences of hatred and racism:  
in lives brutally extinguished;  
in hearts torn apart;  
in memories scarred with pain.

As we remember and honour the victims of genocide,  
and all those who have fought for peace in times of war,  
lead us to sorrow over the sins of humanity.  
Draw close, we pray, to fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters,  
husbands, wives and grandparents,  
and all relatives and loved ones left behind;  
heal the pain in their souls.

Teach us, O Lord,  
to learn how to live for a world  
where differences are respected and valued:  
where fear and mistrust can never overwhelm us;  
nor vengeance be stirred to life in our hearts.

Give peace, we pray, to the people of our troubled world;  
that lives may be restored through your grace.  
And comfort us all, in the knowledge  
that You hold every innocent who dies,  
In the eternal bliss of Your love.  
Amen.



### **Collect Prayer for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity**

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all Your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of Your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



***'Halleluia' by Mike Moyers***

#### **Isaiah 55: 10-13**

<sup>10</sup> As the rain and the snow  
come down from heaven and do not return to it  
without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,  
<sup>11</sup> so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.  
<sup>12</sup> You will go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
will clap their hands.  
<sup>13</sup> Instead of the thorn-bush will grow the juniper,  
and instead of briars the myrtle will grow.  
This will be for the LORD's renown,  
for an everlasting sign,  
that will endure forever.



### **Matthew 13: 1-9; 18-23 - The Parable of the Sower**

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!'

#### **Jesus went on to explain the Parable of the Sower:**

'Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'